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THE BUFFALO MEETING OF THE N. E. A.  
DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

It would be easy to exhaust the vocabulary of superlatives in describing the Buffalo meeting. The arrangements for the material welfare of the association could not be surpassed; neither could the weather, nor the attendance, nor the programme, nor the spirit. No one who attended that meeting can ever again be at heart an educational pessimist.

The programme of the Department of Secondary Education was printed in full in the June SCHOOL REVIEW, and certain prophecies were there indulged in. But the prophetic gift had not descended fully upon the writer at that time. Rarest of events, the programme was carried out in full, just as printed, only one speaker who was to take part in the discussion being absent. President Harris' management set the standard for business method, efficiency, courtesy, and sociability. Never has such a representative body of secondary teachers come together, in such entire sympathy, simplicity, and earnestness before. Never have the workers been so much in evidence, and had such a fair show. There was an amazing lack of telling us how to do it by people who had never done it themselves, and an astonishing amount of testimony as to how they had done it by those who had. Counted by numbers, the attendance was very large; tested by quality it was much larger. Most notable of the addresses was that of President Schurman of Cornell on "What is a Secondary School?" Most notable of actions taken was the unanimous adoption of the Preliminary Report of the Joint Committee of the Departments of Higher and of Secondary Education, published in the June SCHOOL REVIEW, together with the same committee's plan of work for the coming year (see p. 541). This committee, all but still-born at Denver, is today the liveliest thing in American education. The absence of the chairman of the committee, Dr. A. F. Nightingale, who was in Europe, was universally regretted. Everyone was interested in

the work of the committee, and the Department of Science especially took hold magnificently. Dr. Palmer, the new president, will see to it that the committee has all the help it can hope for from that Department.

The meeting was distinctly practical and progressive. It was ready to put itself on record, and eager to do something. But there was no eagerness to do anything rash or ill-considered. The action of the joint meetings in unanimously adopting the Report of the Committee of the American Philological Association on Latin (see *SCHOOL REVIEW* for June 1896) without the slightest opposition in debate was very significant. It means much when the stand taken by a body of specialists is such that it can be so heartily endorsed by a convention of working schoolmen.

The two new features of the programme proved wise and helpful innovations. These were the Round Table Conferences, and the joint meeting of the Departments of Higher and of Secondary Education. The Round Tables caused embarrassment, because it was hard to decide which one to attend. But ultimately each teacher brought up at the place where his heart really was. The attendance at the Round Tables varied from fifty to three hundred. But the membership of each was perfectly homogeneous, so that no one was bored. The joint meeting brought together as they ought to come together the college men and the high school and academy men—and women. It was the first meeting of the kind I ever attended where the principle of reciprocity was completely recognized. The regular programme for such meetings is an exchange of courtesies that often are acrimonious. The time is passed in cataloguing each other's sins, of omission and of commission, and in telling each other they don't know what they are talking about. The result is often fun, but seldom profit. But this joint meeting met for another purpose and in a different spirit.

The officers for next year have a fine example to follow. They must begin early and work hard if they will escape odious comparisons at—Minneapolis, or Milwaukee? C. H. THURBER